Monks House
Rodmell. Tuesday

My dear Vita,

How nice it would be to get another letter from you — still better, to see you. I haven't suggested it since the headache has been an awful nuisance this time, & Vhare had another week in bed. Now, however, even Leonard admits that I'm better.

My notion is that you may be motoring past & drop in & have tea, dinner, whatever you will, — a little conversation. One day next week?

I'm going to be awfully quiet, & don't dare suggest what I long for — a drive to Amberley. But when I'm in robust health, as I shall be, could it really be achieved? Otherwise took me motoring one midnight in London; &

the effect was Rubendown – St Pauls, Tower Bridge, moonlight river, Ottolene in full dress & paint, white & sandy as a painted tombstone erect on Tower Bridge in the midst & all the hotfaces & bargees coming home drunk on Bank Holiday.

In bed I have been fuming over your ~~dam~~ assumption that my liking for the poet Crabbe is avowed. I assure you I bought a copy out of my own pocket money before you were weaned. What's more, I have read Peter Grimes I daresay 6 times in 10 years; where that comes from. NYPL Here is also a magnificent description of wind among bulrushes which I will show you if you will come here. But I find it to my surprise that Crabbe is almost wholly about people. One test of poetry – do you agree? – is that without ~~laughter~~ saying things indeed saying the opposite, it conveys things: thus I always think of fens, marshes, shingle, the East Coast, rivers with a few ships, coarse smelling weeds, men in blue jerseys catching crabs, a whole landscape

in short, as if I had read it all there: but when Crabbe & there is nothing in the rest. One word of description here & there — that is all. The rest is how Lucy got engaged to Edward Shore. So if your poem is as you say all about the ~~woolly~~ woolly aphis, I may Come away from it dreaming of the stars & the South Sea. But hurry up, & write it.

Well, you may think my life a complete failure. What with one thing & another. All I say is that if it comes to giving people pleasure (& I'm not here fishing in your stagnant pool for a compliment) I'm sure my printing Mr Palmer's poems, as I did this summer, gave him a more intense pleasure than all the Common Readers & Mr. Da Hungays I shall ever write gave the rest of the world. And what the objection to whoring after Todd? Better whore, I think, than honestly & timidly, coolly — respectably Columbine with the Times Lit. Sup.

But you see you must wait a long

letter.

And dont go chiding above my head in the moonlight, Especiately beautiful though the vision is.

I must stop: or I wonld now explain why its all right for me to have visions & for you must be exact. I write prose: you poetry. Now poetry being the simpler, cruder, more elementary of the two, furnished also with an adventitious charm, in rhyme & metre, cant carry beauty as prose can. Very little goes to its head. You will say, definie beauty — But no: I am going to stop.

Yours W.

NYPL HAMILL & BARKER 2/5/42

Monks House,
Rodmell.

Monday

My dear Vita,

Well, I dont see why you dont write to me, but perhaps this is my turn. only you are better situated for writing letters than I am. There are two people in your room, whom you can hear talking. There is one dog in my room, & nothing else but books, shapes & pillows & flames of milk & quilts that have fallen off my bed & so on. This has bred in me such a longing to hear what your two people are saying that I must implore you to tell me. Who are they? Elizabeth Bibesco & Geoffrey Scott? Dr John Drinkwater & Rebecca West? The King & Queen? I give it up. Only for me they are brilliant, mysterious, intensely desirable. Tell me who you're been seeing;

What a servant!
I Can not
write at this
angle with
this pen.

Virginia.

by
Vita.

Post
waits 6
Your
affectionate
Villain
all the
time.

Ps. John

Monks House,
Rodmell.

Monday

My dear Vita,

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What a servant!
I can not
write at this
angle with
this pen.

Mi dear, a
(instant message
to your Sophist
wondy what?)
appear, they
don't hear.
Bart
waits to
your
affectionate
villain
all the
time.
V.W.

even if I have never heard of them — that will
be all the better. I try to invent you for myself,
but find I really have only 2 twigs & 3 straws to
do it with. I can get the sensation of seeing
you — hear you. Colour, height, even, now & then,
the eyes & hands, but I find you going off, to
walk in the garden, to play tennis, to dog, to sit
smoking & talking, & then I can't invent a thing
you say — this proves, what I could write
reams about — how little we know anyone,
only moments & gestures, nothing connected
continuous, profound But give me a hint
I implore.

NYPL

It would be better to talk — much better. But
I can't talk yet without getting these infernal pains in
my head, or astonishingly incongruous dreams. Two
dull people come to tea, & I dream of precipices &
horrors at night, as if — can they keep horrors &
precipices concealed in them, I wonder? Then if
you come, I should perhaps dream the other way about —
of bramble bees & wet pudding. Read this one,
& see that a compliment is implied.

I'm really better, & only waiting for Leonard to say
the word to ask you once more if you can't come here.
"Avowed" should be simple; but has now taken the
meaning "protested insincerity"; for me at least,
who am, I suppose, grown hoary

Tuesday Monks House
Rodmell.

Oh you Scandalous ruffian! to come as far as
this house & make off! When the Cook
came up to me with your letter, & your flowers &
your garden, with the story that a lady had
clubbed a little boy in the village & given him them
for no particular reason I almost sprang after you in
my night gown. Ten minutes talking would
have hurt me, & it would have been such fun.
As for the garden & the flowers, words fail me:
in fact I want hear writing when I might have
been talking: The garden has had a jug of water
carefully poured over it. The flowers are in a
broken pot. But beware how you give me
things — woolwork is my passion. Another present
from you, & a tea cosy worked with parrots &
tulips will arrive, & what with you do then?

No: walk to me; or better, come & see me; but I will let Leonard decide. All I insist on is the day before we go back.

Did you write you - I'm afraid I must have - a primal complaining downtrodden letter[2]. There was no reason for it.. only just as one recovers, one always curses - this a sign of health. Here I am, very comfortable, sitting in the sun in the garden, with your fascinating creation, which is reminding me of a Chinese mountain, by my side, & my ~~wood~~ woolwork, & [NYPL], as you guess, pieces of books. (By the way, why not let me read & criticise your poem[2]? Will you?) This morning the thickest manuscript you ever saw arrived from an inspired grocer's boy at Islington, who, being inspired, has not had it typed, & they he will give up grocery for literature if we encourage, or even if we don't: but read it, every word, we must: while Miss somebody, of Nicosia Road Wandsworth waits at the same time to say the devines a human heart in me, & will I tell her how, without

insincerity she can so titivate her heroine's character that it will win popularity with a large number of readers, since she has not a penny in the world, her two or three old mothers to support, & nothing with which her to give up literature. You must admit that this paves for writing novels in the remoter suburbs is all much to their credit, & would 20 Mrs Dalloways abash-[illegible]

I suppose that Pamela is the dog — may she say bitch? — that I so much respected at Tavistock Square one day.

Leonard says 7 pubbies are too many.

Leonard is very anxious to get your article. I wish you could explain exactly what they're doing to the downs at this moment; men, horses, old women — all seem to be creeping & crawling; delving here to weed; & indeed by walking to my garden gate & looking over I can see — I long to describe it, but you would be bored, & perhaps one ought to say nothing about these matters which are so important, so but so hopelessly remote from conversation.

Why do you spoil me so with your Chinese mountains?

VW.

Isn't you constantly [illegible] like Mr. A. when you read him — & shall blame it on!

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say nothing about these matters, which are
so important, so but so hopelessly
remote from conversation.

Why do you spoil me so with
your Chinese mountains?

VW.

I am not fishing for a compliment
but you certainly did let us down!
when you read this — & much blame to you!

Wednesday Marks House

My dear Vicky,

Do keep it up – your belief that I achieve Punch. I answer you. I have need of all your illusions after 6 weeks of lying in bed, drinking milk now & then turning over & answering a letter. We go back on Friday, & what have I achieved? Nothing. Hardly a word written, mass of complete trash read, you not seen, — but what was the sword of acting you to come for half an hour, & then being furious to see you go[2]. The blend headache goes – I catch a cold or argue violently & it comes back. But now it has gone longer than ever before. If I can resist the delights of Chatto, I shall be robust for ever. But what I was going to say was to beg for more illusions. I can assure you, if you'll make me up, I'll make you.

The stove had to go back – what a weight I found him to carry to the host! Inconceivable trash – Conceive a [illegible] boy, after talking Negro –

& sits all day, sitting down to obey out in a firm beautiful hand, with large black capitals, 600 pages of monstrous raptures about the violet-lidded glades, & Lord Eustace in a motor car! The Lady at Wandsworth says she must see me; has no money; feels the romance of ~~Virginity~~ Virginity in her bones: so I've told her to write it out of them in her own proper name - Why these cloaks & disguises? The idea had never struck her that her one novel, with ten different names, is all about herself. & She thinks the idea bold & fascinating. So do I. There is an odd mixture of desperation & jubilation about her, but she'll come, & spend an hour, & oh how I shall scheme at the end of the line! But then, you see, ~~it~~ Providence has so arranged it that other peoples lives — I'm thinking of yours not hers — are romantic, & so by creating & being created she goes along, never knowing the truth about anything. This Providence after all — that you should have illusions. I mean

This is miserable scribbling, the effervescence of idleness. (I'm waiting for luncheon) but I shall rouse up in London. However, I'm going to live the life of a badger, nocturnal, secretive, no dinings out, or sallivantings, but alone in my burrow at the back.

And you will come & see me there — please say you will: if you're in London, let me know. A little secret talk in the basement — what fun! And then I'm going this winter to have one great Gala night a month: the studio with be candle lit, rows of pink, green, & blue candles, & a long table laid with jugs of chocolate & buns. Everybody will be discharged into this room, unmixed, undressed, unhoodwinked. You will emerge like a lighthouse, flitful, sudden, remote (Now that is rather like you.) This way of seeing people might be gigantically successful, & then your cousin has lent me his piano, & I intend to brush up the honour of human intercourse with music. It struck me on my small walk to the river this afternoon (I have had tea & lit the fire, unsuccessfully) that the fear & shock & tonture of meeting one kind come from the conditions — being clashed to each other unmitigatedly, on a sofa — pure, neat, ~~unmitigated~~ unmitigatedly, on a sofa — pure, neat, sudden. (Can't think of the word I want). Now

if we could be dispersed a little — could we visit St
Pauls, or the Tower or Ken Wood, where the scenery
or the noble buildings wined intervene between us,
then we shd sail gradually & calmly into
latitudes of ~~fa~~ intimacy which in ~~the~~ drawing room
are never reached. Do you agree? Every Wednesday
I shall take a trip on an omnibus with someone? to
investigate the shock of human intercourse. But I was
going to talk about Hamlet, what dread last night,
but have no time. What a bore! directly one begins a
little one hasts stop. ~~But~~ Dear Lear.
Say, has something so interesting NYPL But anyhow when is
your poem coming? Now I feel afraid of having asked
for it, as I cannot criticise poetry, only busy entrails?
like an old intoxicated frantic bee: whereas you so, start
your business calmly within. How I envy you!
By the way, the great excitement of my life, responsibility,
& in a sense burden, is Leonard is furiously reading, is
your garden. The cook shouts "Oh ma'am, a crocus is
coming up!" Then "A mouse has nibbled the crocus
ma'am!" I spring up, ~~can~~ accuse Leonard; find it's a
false alarm. But you have complicated my relations
for life.
Your V. W.

52
Tavistock Square,
London, W.C.1.
Telephone : Museum 2621.

Tuesday

My dear Vita,

But for how long?
For ever?

I am filled with envy & admiration.
I think of seeing Persia – Hind &
never seeing you again.
The Dr. has not smiled: all
writing forbidden. So this is my
swan song. But come & see me
V. W.

I let me hear. I hope the tooth is better